

February 8, 2001

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Docket Management System
U.S. Department of Transportation
Room Plaza Level 401
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Subject: FAA Docket No. FAA-2000-8460; Airworthiness Directives

This request for extension of time to comment is submitted on behalf of the Aeronautical Repair Station Association, the Aircraft Electronics Association, the Airline Suppliers Association, the National Air Carriers Association and the Professional Aviation Maintenance Association to the above referenced rulemaking docket. These comments support those previously submitted by the Helicopter Association International.

The Aeronautical Repair Station Association (ARSA) represents entities certificated under Part 145 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) and under similar regulations issued by National Aviation Authorities (NAAs) around the world. The Association membership includes entities that need to comply with certain portions of Airworthiness Directives in their normal course of providing maintenance, preventive maintenance and alteration services to owners and operators of type certificated products. These entities are directly impacted by the proposed rule.

The Aircraft Electronics Association (AEA) represents the interests of the civil aviation avionics business community. The Association's membership includes manufacturers, repair stations and distributors of aviation electronic parts and components. The Association membership includes entities that need to comply with certain portions of Airworthiness Directives in their normal course of providing maintenance, preventive maintenance and alteration services to owners and operators of type certificated products.

The Airline Suppliers Association (ASA) represents the civil aviation parts distribution industry. Many of ASA's member businesses routinely handle aircraft parts to which certain aspects of Airworthiness Directives apply. It is common practice in the industry to identify airworthiness directives that are applicable and to make customers aware of such directives.

The National Air Carrier Association (NACA) represents passenger and cargo airlines, certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with 14 CFR Part 121

and as such must comply with Part 39 of the FARs. The application of this regulation has a direct impact on the members of NACA.

The Professional Aviation Maintenance Association (PAMA) represents the interests of individual aviation maintenance and avionics professionals. The mission of the association is to enhance professionalism and recognition of aviation maintenance professionals through communication, education, representation and support, for continuous improvement in aviation safety. The Association membership includes aviation maintenance professionals from every segment of the industry and numerous companies that employ and train them. PAMA's membership will be directly and adversely impacted by many facets of the proposed rule.

The Associations have not had a chance to closely review the impact of the proposed "plain language" initiated rule, nor has a section-by-section analysis been thoroughly investigated.

There are several areas of inquiry that the industry would like to investigate in order to determine the likely effects of the proposed rule change on its members and the industry.

The proposal seems to impose new obligations on the private sector. In some cases, those obligations assume that the FAA will provide a foundation to support the obligation; however, there is no correlative obligation on the part of the government to provide this foundation. One such example is the requirement in proposed 39.17 to send proposals to the FAA Manager named in the directive. While it is common practice to name FAA personnel as contact points for alternative methods of compliance, there is no obligation on the part of the FAA to do this, and these persons named are often not FAA Managers. If the FAA intends to direct the private sector to make a response that relies on FAA prior action, then the FAA should be obliged to perform the action. The Associations would like additional time to study the rule and determine where else the proposal has imposed burdens on the industry that could remain unfulfilled unless the FAA meets its own obligations.

The additional "common" language proposed by the FAA may not apply to all Airworthiness Directives and as such would not enhance the clarity of those rules. Further, there are several methods for submitting requests for alternative means of compliance to a regulation that exist in a manner contrary to the proposal; for example, Part 11 provides rules for submitting Petitions for Exemption. The Associations plan to support the FAA's efforts to clarify the regulations by proposing alternative language that meets the needs of the FAA and the public without creating the sort of internal regulatory conflicts demonstrated by this proposal.

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The grant of additional time to comment will not adversely affect the safety benefits expected by the proposed rule. The substantive change suggested is to clarify and simplify the current rule. It is therefore in the public's interest to ensure that the proposal in fact can accomplish its purpose. The undersign respectfully request an extension of the time to submit comments until April 12, 2001.

Respectfully submitted,

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